



Command Sergeant Major
A. Frank Lever III
CSM, ARNG

**2003 Holiday Message
From Command Sergeant Major A. Frank Lever III**

As other Americans celebrate the holidays, I want to let you know how thankful I am for the tens of thousands of citizens-soldiers who have selflessly been performing their duties while protecting this country and serving overseas in this ongoing Global War on Terrorism. Because you are both citizens and soldiers, always remember you are twice the patriots.

During the holidays, we need to pay honor to the citizen-soldiers and their families who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We must also continually support our wounded troops and their families, and prepare to welcome our returning troops. These brave people are our nation's newest heroes.

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, countless soldiers, their families and their employers make untold sacrifices. Many men and women proudly wearing National Guard uniforms have deployed to undisclosed locations overseas, patrolled hundreds of airports, guarded our national borders, performed security duties at countless locations and served in a multitude of others missions — causing major disruptions for themselves, their families and employers. I am extremely proud of these citizen-soldiers who continue to selflessly protect our beloved states, territories and nation, just as the National Guard has served the United States since 1636.

After looking back on the Army National Guard 367-year history, I am amazed by the proud citizen-soldier spirit that burns so brightly within our troops stationed all over the world and here at home. They answered the initial call after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and continue to answer our leaders' call to service. They emulate the Minuteman tradition established more than three centuries ago. I am also proud of both the families and employers, who, without their unflagging support, we would not be enjoying such unprecedented-military successes as thousands more citizen-soldiers continue to be called to fight for our country. The National Guard is truly one big family. Since we all work so hard to maintain that cohesive bond, we, as the nation's oldest military institution, continue to efficiently accomplish all of our assigned missions.

Because the National Guard is such a large family, I would encourage citizen-soldiers to reach out to their fellow citizen-soldiers who are deployed. I encourage you to invite other citizen-soldiers into your homes so that they can share in a holiday meal or celebration, while also enjoying the National Guard's special fellowship. By doing this, I can assure you this year's holiday season will be even more special than the last.

Since the holidays are obviously the busiest travel days of the year, I also want to remind all of you that you and your family's personal safety and well-being are my top concern during this holiday season. Always be vigilant when traveling. Just as you observe safety as Rule No. 1 in your own unit, safety should be priority No. 1 at home and on the road as well. Go to www.safetyserve.com/armg and learn more about the Army National Guard's driver safety program. It could save you or your loved one's lives.

In the meantime, let us all pause this holiday season, remember the blessings we enjoy living in this great country and pray we positively meet new challenges posed by the future. God bless our Army National Guard family, God bless our states and territories and finally, God bless the United States of America

A. FRANK LEVER III
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